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DeLoach _____
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UPI-166

(MANHUNT)

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.--FBI AGENTS BELIEVED AT ONE POINT WEDNESDAY THAT THEY HAD TRACKED DOWN ERIC STARVO GALT, THE ALLEGED ASSASSIN OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, SOMEWHERE IN CALIFORNIA, SOURCES CLOSE TO THE INVESTIGATION DISCLOSED TODAY.

THE TIP REPORTEDLY CAME FROM THE "ALLEGED BROTHER" OR SOME OTHER CO-CONSPIRATOR IN THE KILLING.

IT APPARENTLY WAS BECAUSE OF THE EXPECTED IMPENDING ARREST THAT AUTHORITIES OBTAINED A FIRST-DEGREE MURDER WARRANT AGAINST GALT, AND ALSO A FEDERAL WARRANT CHARGING HIM WITH CONSPIRACY.

THE EXACT LOCATION IN CALIFORNIA WHERE AUTHORITIES EXPECTED TO MAKE THE ARREST WAS NOT DISCLOSED, BUT GALT IS KNOWN TO HAVE SPENT TIME IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA.

SOURCES SAID THE TIP OBVIOUSLY WAS WRONG, OR THAT GALT--IF HE IS IN CALIFORNIA--ELUDED AUTHORITIES.

4/18--TS633PES